

## THE CONJURING

By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



*The Conjuring* is a well-crafted, intelligent recapitulation of the unusual and fascinating paranormal experiences of a couple whose fame was captured through a series of disturbances in seemingly normal homes. The Millers, Ed and Lorraine, a demonologist and clairvoyant couple assist a family with a big problem. The Millers are experts in helping families break free from ghosts and other remnants of the past. They have a collection of haunted artifacts that is disturbing just to look at. To say more would spoil all the fun.

This is not your run-of-the-mill ghost story. The movie is more suspense than shock and possesses the expected dramatic startling moments. *The Conjuring* does a good job of demonstrating all the steps needed when a demonic exorcism is called for. I am not expecting anyone to believe or not believe in the veracity of what happened or in the existence of such forces. Those are personal decisions to be made individually. Just know what you are getting into if you decide to watch this story.

*The Conjuring* is a sad story with more than just a little psychological flavor. The impact of witnessing other people's trauma, death, evil and the aftermath of spirits in turmoil is no easy task. When you encounter entities that seem to have their own post-traumatic stress symptoms, it makes for an interesting possibility to consider. From a purely culturally sensitive viewpoint, there are many cultures who believe in the ability of demons and otherworldly energies to inhabit the bodies of human and even non-human hosts in order to settle scores, enact revenge or re-enact the horrors that were done to them when they lived in human form. This is the stuff nightmares are made of.

If some of the scenes seem familiar, note that the couple who investigated these incidents also took on the Amityville horrors, but were not as prominently featured in

that story. I really enjoyed the strength of the family in *The Conjuring* and how they were able to get through what must have been nothing less than a living hell. For you skeptics out there, you might still appreciate the honest portrayal of the Millers as sincere and genuine in their pursuit of the truth and their objectivity when looking for tangible explanations – such as old pipes and drafty hallways – as opposed to actual things that really do go bump in the night.

I can say that this was not a particularly terrifying movie. So, if you like those, this is not for you. *The Conjuring* is pensive, thoughtful and respectful of the subject and I believe an accurate portrayal of the collective experiences of these people, albeit with the usual dramatic elements tossed in to sell tickets. Go and see for yourself. There are plenty of things to discuss afterwards.

I give *The Conjuring* four haunted music boxes.

